



CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE 110 © 1991. P. O. Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. World Rights Reserved. Artwork and quoted material herein © the artists concerned. Used here for promotional purposes only. \$9 for the next twelve issues. Set of back issues \$40 postpaid.

BIG DOG DIGEST 1 is \$1.50 pp from David M. Pitts, 2709 S. Taylor, Amarillo, TX 79109.

PROPAGANDA WAR 6 for an SASE from Clark Dissmeyer, POB 1531, Kearney, NE 68848.

Bill Shut returns with a duo. **INSUFFICIENT DADA DIGEST** and **INSUFFICIENT DADA MINI**. 2.50 pp for both from Jamie Alder, 24816 Aden Ave., Newhall, CA 91321.

BULL DOG is a one-shot comic zine by the makers of **VETO Magazine** in Montreal, Canada. \$3 pp from Martin Lemm, C. P. 5313. Succ. "C", Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 3M4. Some French commentary on comix.

BY CLAY GEERDES

THE SLEEPY LITTLE ENGINE. A children's story to be read to kids with trains on the brain. \$2.50 pp.

ESSAYS: VOLUME ONE. A group of essays about my early life for those readers who have always wondered who the hell Clay Geerdes is and what he is really like. \$3.50 pp.

ESSAYS: VOLUME TWO. More general essays, a couple of which have appeared in **COMIX WAVE** or elsewhere. \$3.50 pp.

SAILOR: An extended account of my Navy years. \$3.00 pp.

Just because it is displayed in a museum or an art gallery doesn't mean it's art.

Fiddle makers often had to overcome great difficulties in the pursuit of their craft, using pieces of broken bottles as scrapers, for example, until they could acquire the proper tools. Young musicians who could not buy or borrow instruments sometimes improvised their first fiddles from wooden cigar boxes, using cypress slats from the barn for necks and bones for pegs. Many faced parental wrath for unraveling window screens to make strings and sneaking thread from the sewing box to supply hairs for bows made of bent branches. Sometimes they even raided the family horse for a few strands from its mane or tail. Wedisson Reed of Eunice whittled instruments from cypress planks and eventually adapted his craft to include top and back plates of spray-painted formica. Paul Devillier of Arnaudville used lumber two-by-fours for his first fiddle and interior paneling for his second. Homemade instruments such as these, born of stubborn desire, symbolize the Cajuns' passion for making music.

CAJUN COUNTRY, 1991

Cajun music is very big in the Bay Area these days and bands like Bayou Pon Pon, Sugar Bee, California Cajun Orchestra, and Motor Dude Zydeco play regularly at Ashkenaz, the club where I work. If you're into the culture and music of the Cajuns, you'll want a copy of **CAJUN COUNTRY**. If you can't find it in your local bookstore, you can order a copy from the University of Mississippi Press, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, MS 39211-6492. It's around \$18 pp. The book is filled with history, maps, and some nice photographs.

I agree with Steve Willis that an open database is the logical way to list all comix and that a library is the logical place for this. It would be nice to think that any of us could simply call in and download our latest, and that any user with the spare paper could print the entire listing anytime, but it's not that simple. For those who think it is, I recommend **THE CUCKOO'S EGG**. All of us who work with PCs and print on public terminals have suffered virus problems and I am just enough of a skeptic to think there is more than one asshole out there who would think it was funny as hell to download a virus designed to fuck up a comic database.

I still have trouble with the money trip attached to any Price Guide. The values listed in the Kennedy Guide in 1983 were all arbitrary, just as much as those Overstreet has been listing for the past twenty years. Any comic or piece of original artwork is worth what someone is willing to pay someone else for it. Pricing is manipulated all the time by the major companies and the stores that play ball with them. You can't manufacture rarity, yet it is happening all the time. If there are a million copies of something floating around, that book is never going to be rare no matter how much hype is written around it in the Buyer's Guide and Comics Journal. If it has Collector's Item on the cover, it isn't. I saw bagged copies of **GHOST RIDER 15** on sale in a Berkeley comic store this morning for \$7 apiece and that book has only been out about a month. Give me a break! Stores get these books from Marvel or DC and they hold them back from the public a few weeks then double or triple the price on them. I know this is part of the game these days, but it spells greed to me just like it always did.

What I have seen in my lifetime is a hobby I enjoyed become just one more possession of the rich. When you start talking about comic books that cost several dollars, you're talking about a privileged buyer who is making a lot of money or has a father who is. When I was a boy, the poorest kid in the neighborhood could buy a ten cent comic. Price Guides contribute to a continual escalation of value, one which is artificial and contrived to benefit a select few who already own the oldest and most valuable comic books listed. No one in my circle can collect the early copies of **ACTION** or **SUPERMAN** that sell for thousands of dollars. A guide used to cost a couple of bucks and even these sell for \$15-20 these days.

The appeal of the lottery winner is deeply engrained in the American psyche. In fact, the myth of striking it rich is a basic one in our culture, but then so is the opposing Puritan ethic deploring the vice of extravagance. We are a society in transition, still engaged in the battle between the stern values of our forefathers and our present worship of affluence and celebrity. Our compromise is to revel in opulence vicariously, but to relish tales of rich people who experience a comeuppance. We still need to hear that the rich are corrupt, unhappy, lead empty lives, and are plagued with misfortune...

—Barbara Goldsmith
JOHNSON V. JOHNSON



"SMILE WHEN YOU SAY THAT, PARTNER."

You are in the land of gross excess weirdness. The land of Amnesia and Sunshine Lobotomy. The land of total Concrete Rejection. Where the past has been paved over. Emptiness is all around. And the neon wilderness sparkles like junk jewelry under perpetual good weather. To be in L.A. is like being in the hole of a doughnut, with only the illusion that there is even a doughnut around the hole. Anything bad that anyone has ever said about Southern California is true.

James Horwitz

THEY WENT THATAWAY, 1976.

Horwitz is a Front Row Kid from New York who gave himself the task of looking up all the old Cowboy stars from the early days of the western movies. This book is more about him and his reactions and the old folks who refused to go through the rap again than it is about the westerns, but he manages to cover a lot of territory and get the basics across. You find out whatever happened to various people like Gene Autry and Roy Rogers and Tim McCoy and you get a lot of funny anecdotes about the subculture that has formed around old cowboy movies the way it has around other fantasies like Star Trek and Ninja Turtles and Elvis Presley. I grew up on Gene Autry and The Durango Kid and The Cisco Kid and Tim Holt, mainly because my dad was a fan and took me and my brother along to the Colonial Theater in Lincoln just about every Friday night of our childhood. The cowboy hero was a moralist then, a good guy, nothing like what you see in the post-spaghetti westerns of today. One of my favorite scenes was seeing Tim McCoy, dressed in black, walk into a saloon, step up to the bar, and order a glass of milk. Naturally, some macho trail bum would make fun of him and he would have to beat up half the guys in the bar. To be honest, I don't think he ever touched that glass of milk. He just ordered it. McCoy was an army colonel and an Indian expert, a well educated man who outlived all his peers. Horwitz found him retired in Nogales, Arizona. At 84, Tim, an old soldier, spoke out against the immorality and illegality of the Viet Nam war! And him a Republican, too.

THEY WENT THATAWAY is long out of print, but you can probably find a copy in a used bookstore and I think you'll enjoy reading about this period. Today's screen hero is too often a cold-blooded killer little different from the villains he slaughters over and over again. I've been watching some old Tim Holt westerns on video lately and they are a lot more fun.

ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON!

The male brain learns by manipulating its environment, yet the typical student is forced to sit still for long hours in the classroom. The male brain is primarily visual, while classroom instruction demands attentive listening. Boys are clumsy in fine hand coordination, yet are forced at an early age to express themselves in writing. Finally, there is little opportunity in most schools, other than during recess periods, for gross motor movements or rapid muscular responses. In essence, the classrooms in most of our nation's primary grades are geared to skills that come naturally to girls but develop very slowly in boys. The results shouldn't be surprising. a *learning disabled* child who is also frequently *hyperactive*.

Richard M. Restak:

The Brain: The Final Frontier.

If you have a unique experience and try to tell someone about it, no one will believe you. People have to fit what they hear into a familiar frame of reference and that frame usually expands or contracts with education and experience. When I was growing up in the forties, there were numerous movies about ghosts and spirits and angels. These otherworldly beings were readily accepted by the movie audience, an audience assumed to be mostly a white Christian entity. I saw all of these characters on the screen and in that context they were as real to me as anything else, but I never saw any of them in my real life. I was fascinated with magic for a while and found out how most of the illusions and tricks were done by reading about Houdini and Thurston and Blackstone. I saw some illusions in carnival and circus sideshows which were quite well done; I also saw others which were very poorly constructed and didn't even fool the ten-year-old looking at them. These days I have seen psychics and parapsychiatrists on talk shows and I don't believe much of anything they say. I see them as successful hustlers, like astrologists. Anyone familiar with psychedelic drugs and hallucinogens certainly realizes why certain people had visions and heard voices in the past.

When I was a boy, patent medicines were still sold to anyone in drugstores. Lots of these concoctions

contained hallucinogenic compounds. Cough syrups contained codeine and laudanum contained opium and a good shot of either one might convince the taker he or she was seeing a ghost or two.

The popularity of movies about ghosts, spirits, and angels in the late forties was a logical side effect of the Second World War. Millions died in that war and those who survived wanted very badly to believe that their fathers and husbands and wives were up there somewhere in Heaven waiting for them. As the war faded into the distance, Hollywood dropped the angels and went on to technicolor westerns.

Most of the ghost stories which began with Thorne Smith's TOPPER [written in 1926 and on film by 1937] were light fantasies, written about at the time as screwball comedies. Those that were serious often debunked the idea of spirits. The standard haunted house film ended with the discovery that they were not ghosts at all. Some gangsters or family members out to frighten other people out of the haunted house and they had used various gimmicks in the process. In all the films about angels, however, the angels were taken seriously. That was supposedly a real angel that came to visit the savings and loan manager played by James Stewart in IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE. Most of these visiting spirits date back to Charles Dickens' CHRISTMAS CAROL which I heard read over the radio every year of my childhood by Lionel Barrymore.

Actually, it was Stephen King that made the ghosts real. He took the staples of horror fiction and reddid them all one by one, taking them seriously and never debunking a single one. Evil is real in the work of King and it is never balanced by Good. Do not suspect for a second that there is a rationale explanation for the demonic behavior of the car CHRISTINE or for the evil that manifests itself in IT. Stephen Spielberg took evil seriously in his work, too. The POLTERGEIST cannot be explained away anymore than the GREMLINS or the GHOULIES.

\$2 will get you a sample of Joe Bob Briggs' WE ARE THE WEIRD newsletter. POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. "Nobody is going to steal your ideas," says Joe Bob in V. 7, No. 24. "You don't get widely plagiarized until you're widely published--and then it doesn't matter." JB calls me a hippie in this issue, but don't hold that against him. Actually, I think all hippies come from Texas. After all, an Austin man, Gilbert Shelton, invented the Freak Brothers. Myself, I was born in Iowa and raised in Nebraska.

I've always been here somewhere. I'm the white space in this newsletter, always back here grinning through the print. I juggle the pieces for you, paste up reality so you can make of it what you will.